



Cornwall AONB Partnership Meeting
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 14th December 2006
at 2.00 pm in the Grenville Room, New County Hall, Truro

Present:

Peter Mansfield Chairman, Cornwall AONB Partnership

Members:

Cllr Val Newman North Cornwall District Council
Cllr Graeme Hicks Kerrier District Council
Sarah Manning The Countryside Agency
Phil Dyke The National Trust
Jimmy Scobie Country Landowners Business Association
Amy Dinsdale Policy Advisor, National Farmers Union
Ron Daniel Cornwall Association of Local Councils

Supporting Officers:

Mike Hawkey Cornwall County Council
Al Collings Caradon District Council
David Attwell North Cornwall District Council
Malcolm Pinch Restormel Borough Council
Paul Walton Cornwall AONB Partnership Manager
Colette Holden Cornwall AONB Assistant Officer
Ed Thompson Cornwall AONB Community Officer
Karen Johns Cornwall AONB Office Manager

1. Apologies

Actions

Members:

Cllr Sue Callen, Carrick District Council; Cllr Owen Philp; Penwith District Council; Cllr Neil Hatton, Cornwall County Council; Cllr Russell Bartlett, Caradon District Council; Cllr Annette Egerton, Restormel Borough Council; Sue Wearing, SW RDA; Nick Lawrence, The National Trust; Mike Robins, Environment Agency; John Holmes, Natural England

Supporting Officers:

Steve Crummay, Cornwall County Council; Deborah Boden, World Heritage Site Team; Robert Lacey, Carrick District Council.

Welcome: Jimmy Scobie, new CLBA representative, and Amy Dinsdale, new NFU representative were welcomed to their first Partnership meeting.

It was noted that there was no member or officer representative present from Carrick or Penwith District Councils.

2. Discussion on issues arising from the Partners' Presentation

Prior to the meeting, the following presentations were given to Partners on activities and projects relating to delivery of the AONB Management Plan policies and actions:

- Sam Groom, Tourism Officer, Carrick District Council – A Cornish River
- Colette Holden, Cornwall AONB Unit – Cornwall AONB Website
- Mary Combe, Cornwall FWAG – work of FWAG including Cornwall AONB SDF project
- Jemima Ball, Fal River Links Partnership – Fal River Links

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Notes of the presentations are attached as Appendix 1. Slides from the presentations are available on the Partnership page of the Cornwall AONB Website - www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/partnership.html.

- The ending of the Penwith ESA scheme as a consequence of the changes to the national agri environment programme and the introduction of the Entry Level and Higher Level Schemes was mentioned in Mary Combe's presentation. Concern was expressed that there could be adverse consequences for the landscape if, as is feared, many farmers currently within the ESA cannot qualify for the HLS once their current agreement runs out.
 - Partners **AGREED** that this should be looked at in more detail with Natural England.

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Partners were informed that the AONB Unit had recently commented on a review of the Agri-Environment Higher Level Scheme targeting statements. A more in-depth review is planned and the AONB Unit will take part.

- Cornwall FWAG exists on project funding and do not receive any core funding. The question of whether the AONB Partnership should look to provide further funding in 2007/08 was raised.
 - It was **AGREED** that FWAG play a vital role in delivering the objectives of the AONB designation. The AONB Unit should explore further funding opportunities and discuss this with Dave Lewis of the County Council's Natural Environment Service, who is looking into various sources of funding for FWAG and other projects/initiatives/organisations.

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3. Minutes of last meetings and matters arising

3.1 Partnership meeting (28th September 2006)

- The minutes were **AGREED** to be a true and accurate record.

Matters arising:

Page 2, item 3.1, undergrounding of electricity wires in the AONB – experience in the Wye Valley AONB where one electricity company is undergrounding wires while Western Power are not has led to media interest in the situation.

Ofgem is due to receive a report detailing the approach being taken by companies

across the country.

Following the last meeting, S Manning did report back to Natural England on the situation and they are keen to follow it up with DEFRA and Ofgem. S Manning will keep following up any progress on this, and will also inform them of the Wye Valley situation.

Page 3, item 3.2, Wave Hub proposal – project management of the wave hub proposal in West Cornwall has been delegated by the SW RDA to Cornwall County Council.

Page 3, item 4.1, Atlantic Coast and Valleys (ACV) Project – Cllr Val Newman declared an interest in this project. North Cornwall District Council has approached the AONB Unit with the possibility of extending E Thompson's secondment with the project management until the end of March 2007.

- Partners **AGREED** that the AONB Partnership Manager can make the decision as to whether to extend the secondment or not, as the decision is largely an operational matter.

An impact assessment of the ACV project upon the AONB landscape, that was agreed at the last meeting should be undertaken, has not had to be undertaken as urgently as initially thought was necessary as the amount of soil movement is less than first anticipated. The impact assessment can be carried out in 2007 after the bid has been submitted at end of December 2006.

Partners can find out further information on the ACV project from the following link on the North Cornwall District Council website - <http://www.ncdc.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=10906>.

Page 6, item 7, Cornwall AONB Partnership Annual Review 2006 – this has been widely circulated and a copy is available on the AONB website. The SWPLF Communications Group undertook a peer review of the document and provided some helpful feedback on the design, layout and content.

Page 6, item 7, Planning applications/Guide for AONB Partnership members – following discussion at the last meeting, where the importance of local authorities acting as champions of the AONB was highlighted, particularly with regard to contentious planning applications – the AONB Unit have arranged to give a briefing to Carrick District Council Planning Committee and their Development Control officers.

Page 6, item 7, Valuing our Environment report/Convergence Programme – details of the new Convergence Funding Programme is now out for consultation.

3.2 Officer Meeting (16th November 2006)

The minutes were **AGREED** to be a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising:

Page 9, item 4.1, Landscape Enhancement Projects in the Cornwall AONB – the AONB Unit will follow up the initial discussion at the Officer Meeting, with National Trust property wardens and District Council Officers to discuss which sites

they would consider as priority sites in need of landscape enhancement.

County Council's Heritage Assets Panel – this was raised during discussion on the above item. The outcome from the work of the Panel is being discussed at the end of January 2007, and a report will be made to the AONB Partnership meeting in March.

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3.2.1 Members Attendance at Partnership meetings

Partners considered the summary of partners' attendance at AONB Partnership meetings that had been included in the agenda. Substitutes for Member representatives was raised, and had been suggested before.

- It was **AGREED** that the Chairman should raise the issue of attendance with the relevant members.

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4. Reports for Decision

4.1 Cornwall AONB Partnership Business Plan 2007 - 2010

A draft Business Plan was included in the agenda papers. A more detailed work programme will be submitted with the funding bid to Natural England at the end of December 2006.

It was suggested, that the list of key work areas on page 2 of the Business Plan, although not in any priority order, should be altered slightly e.g. so that the Management Plan is the first in the list.

- Partners **AGREED** the draft Business Plan, subject to the re-ordering of some items in the key work areas list.

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4.2 Europarc Charter Park status for the Cornwall AONB

As previously agreed by the Partnership, one of the key areas of expenditure of the core budget for 2006/07 is Sustainable Tourism. CoaST, the sustainable tourism group, has begun to apply the work being done on sustainable tourism within Cornwall to the areas of the AONB. The purpose of this item was to seek agreement of the Partnership to submit the Cornwall AONB for European Charter status – a scheme organised by the Europarc Federation, which represents over 500 protected areas across Europe.

If the application to Europarc was successful, partners questioned whether the Europarc 'badge' would be confusing or misleading. The AONB Unit confirmed that the Cornwall AONB branding would not be changed. It would be a charter mark to show that tourism in the Cornwall AONB is sustainable.

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- Partners **AGREED** that the AONB Unit should submit an application to Europarc
- Partners also advised that the AONB Unit should discuss funding opportunities and involvement in a project with the SW RDA soon, rather than leaving until a later stage.

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4.3 Schedule of Proposed Cornwall AONB Partnership meeting dates for 2007

The proposed list of dates for Officer and Partnership meetings for 2007 was AGREED.

5. Reports for information and discussion

5.1 Living Landscapes, Hidden Costs of Managing the Countryside

Amy Dinsdale, Policy Officer, NFU, gave a presentation on the new report that had been produced jointly by the NFU and CPRE. A copy of the slides from the presentation will be posted on the Partnership page of the Cornwall AONB website.

Partners suggested there may be opportunities for the AONB Partnership to work more closely with the NFU on projects and also link with Natural England's land management campaign.

5.2 Cornwall County Council Countryside Access Strategy (Access to the County)

M Hawkey provided an update on this Strategy. The Strategy will cover all types of paths – SW Coast Path; local authority owned land for public enjoyment e.g. Carn Brea and Kit Hill; paths given permissive access by landowners; Cornwall Wildlife Trust and South West Lakes sites etc.

The purpose of the Strategy is to set out how the inland paths network will be managed. It will provide information on sites, trails, paths and bridleways that are available to potential users, and will also detail where sources of funding will come from to undertake the management. The Draft Strategy will be available for consultation shortly.

5.3 Launch of Natural England

The new Government Agency – Natural England was launched on 1st October 2006. It has been formed from the former Countryside Agency; English Nature; and DEFRA's Rural Development Service. The website address is www.naturalengland.org.uk.

Partners were advised that, since the last meeting, Natural England has launched 4 campaigns on which to base their objectives – Health; Marine; Climate Change; and Sustainable Land Management. It would be appropriate for some projects looking for Natural England funding to fall into one or more of these campaign categories.

The Cornwall, Devon and Isles of Scilly Area Team will be headed by Phil Collins. Staff are still based in existing offices occupied by the former 3 agencies – but this will be rationalised in time, as at present there are 3 different offices based in Exeter.

Coastal access: it was reported at the meeting that Natural England's report to DEFRA on coastal access, which was scheduled for December 2006, will now be made by the end of February 2007. This will mean that the subsequent public consultation on recommendations by DEFRA will also be delayed.

6. NAAONB/SWPLF

The latest **NAAONB Outstanding magazine** was circulated at the meeting. Page 12 includes an article on the Cornwall AONB SDF projects.

The **SWPLF have produced a calendar** again for 2007. Cornwall AONB is featured on the month of November. Copies were available for Partners at the

meeting.

7. Any Other Business

AONB Unit Staff News – E Thompson has passed his MSc Open University degree.

K Johns has passed the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) course. Partners were also informed that K Johns is expecting a baby in May 2007 and that maternity cover arrangements will be needed.

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Strategy and Action – This document sets out the framework for economic development in the county to 2021. The initial draft did not, in the view of the AONB Unit, place sufficient weight on the importance of the landscape to Cornwall, its role as an economic driver and the significance of the tourism industry. Comments were submitted on behalf of the AONB Partnership and the final version is much improved and includes specific text suggested by the AONB Unit and includes the AONB Partnership as a potential delivery partner in key actions.

Cornwall AONB Projects Grants Panel – Partners AGREED that they wished for the existing Partnership members (Cllr Neil Hatton; John Holmes and John James) continue their role on the Grants Panel.

8. Date of next meeting

Thursday 29th March 2007, 2.00 pm, in the Grenville Room, New County Hall Truro. This will be preceded with lunch and Partners presentations from 12 noon.

All

Notes of Presentations given by Partners prior to the main Cornwall AONB Partnership meeting on 14th December 2006

Sam Groom, Tourism Officer, Carrick District Council – provided a presentation on the new ‘A Cornish River’ website. Each district in Cornwall used to produce its own tourism brochure, but now there is just one produced for the whole County – Visit Cornwall. Sam mentioned other publications that the individual districts still produce e.g. Boot, Bus and Branch line booklet which Penwith District Council publish, which for 2007 will cover West Cornwall.

Sam presented the new ‘A Cornish River’ website which will be updated by Tourist Information Centres and Carrick District Council Tourism Department. It contains information on what there is to see and do in the Falmouth, Truro and Roseland areas. It includes a search facility to find accommodation and events going on. The Cornish River website links to the Visit Britain website, so all accommodation providers etc included on the Cornish River website are nationally accredited in order for them to be promoted by Visit Britain.

The Cornwall AONB Partnership, funded, through Natural England (then Countryside Agency) project funding, the Cornish River leaflet and the AONB Unit have worked with the Cornish River working group to provide text for the AONB page.

A Cornish River website address is <http://www.acornishriver.co.uk/>. The website provides a reciprocal link to the Cornwall AONB website.

Colette Holden, Cornwall AONB Assistant Officer, presented the newly designed Cornwall AONB website. The format of the old website had outgrown its capacity since it was launched in 2003, and it was in need of re-designing if needing to contain much more information about different aspects of the Cornwall AONB. Statistics showed that visitors to the website were increasing year on year, but many people were not remaining on the site for more than 30 seconds, possibly because of the limited information available on the site.

The new website contains a new detailed Explore page, where people can find out lots of information on what there is to see and do in each of the 12 different areas of the Cornwall AONB. There are links to various community websites, and the AONB Unit will be contacting all the websites it has included on the website, to ask if they would provide a reciprocal link to the Cornwall AONB website.

There are some pages marked ‘currently under construction’ but it was felt important to get the new site live. The remaining text will be completed in early January 2007. The AONB Unit will then produce a press release to promote the website to residents and visitors. Partners also suggested that it should also be promoted to schools and colleges. Partners also suggested that the Tamar Valley and Isles of Scilly AONBs should also be more clearly mentioned and linked on the website.

The Cornwall AONB website address is www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk. It is appreciated by the AONB Unit that it is paramount that the new website is kept up to date and time will be built into the AONB Unit work programme to ensure this is undertaken.

Mary Combe, FWAG provided a presentation on the work of Cornwall FWAG, which included the work that has been carried out as a result of funding from the Cornwall AONB SDF 2006/07.

A copy of the slides from Mary's presentation are on the Partnership page of the Cornwall AONB website <http://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/partnership.html>.

Jemima Ball, Fal River Links, provided a presentation on the work of the Fal River Links partners.

A copy of the slides from Jemima's presentation are on the Partnership page of the Cornwall AONB website <http://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/partnership.html>